

American Experiments intro

Thesis

Unevenly, the world proceeds to turn society into a market culture governed by the economic nexus. The fall of socialist block in 1989, accompanied by a massive shift of outsourced production to the developing world, accelerated this development.

What possibilities open up for art which stands apart from these apparently inescapable market trends? For art which stands in a critical or oppositional relation to the dominant wave? As the expanding commercial logic of entertainment governs cultural expression and the production of communicative forms, are alternatives possible? And if so, how can they come into being, produce expressive works, and maintain a community of makers and audiences? And what would they look like, what concerns would they articulate, and to whom would they be addressed and meaningful?

I study independent media, particularly experimental work in film, video, and new communicative forms, to begin to answer these questions, to open our understanding of this dynamic: its possibilities and its processes. Avant garde media provides a rich field for exploration, abundant examples for analysis, and an evolved set of interlocking institutions, formal and informal, to answer these compelling questions.

Terms